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EXAMINER

LEE, BENNY T

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2817

DATE MAILED: 08/14/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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It should be noted that regarding applicant's response filed 17 July 2006, at the section designated "In the Specification", the contents of that section do not appear to constitute any amendments to the specification and has accordingly been treated as comments or remarks, rather than amendments. The examiner has never the less withdrawn the objection to the specification.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 2, note that the recitation "the dielectric coating varies ... in the same direction as ..." remains vague in meaning, even in light of the specification. Clarification is needed.

The following claims have been found objectionable for reasons set forth below:

In claim 4, line 3, note that --at least two-- should be inserted prior to "microstrip lines" for consistency of claim terminology.

In claims 6, 12, 15, note that "the dielectric coating has (or comprises a material having) a dielectric constant" should be rephrased as --the dielectric constant of the dielectric coating is-- for clarity of description, since the dielectric constant of the dielectric coating has been previously defined.

In claim 18, lines 5, 6, note that "at least one" should be rephrased as --at least a first-- at each instance for consistency of description.

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

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(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 2; 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by any one of Bruns, Maschotta and Anderson (all references of record).

Note that each reference discloses a printed circuit board arrangement, comprising: a dielectric substrate (4 in Bruns; 2 in Maschotta; 14 in Anderson); a plurality of microstrip lines (8, 10, 12 in Bruns; not numbered in Maschotta; 12 in Anderson) disposed on the substrate and a ground plane (2 in Bruns; 1 in Maschotta; 16 in Anderson) disposed on an opposed surface of the dielectric substrate; a dielectric coating (6 in Bruns; 3 in Maschotta; 14 in Anderson) disposed over each of the microstrip lines, where the dielectric coating thickness (the tables in figs. 3a, 3b of Bruns; 4 times the substrate thickness in Maschotta; $t=5.4$ mils in Anderson) is clearly thicker than one half the thickness of the dielectric substrate. As described in each reference, the effect of the dielectric coating provides for reduced cross talk between the adjacent conductors (e.g. in the forward or far end of the conductors as discussed by the abstract of Anderson). Note that in each reference the dielectric coating is a "conformal coating" which inherently increases the thickness relative to "the average conformal coating", as far as such a recitation can be understood.

Claims 6; 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by either Maschotta or Anderson (both references of record).

Note that each reference discloses that the dielectric coating is or can be the same as the dielectric material of the substrate. For example see the alternate embodiment in Maschotta and the common dielectric material (14) constituting the substrate and coating in Anderson.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Maschotta (of record).

Maschotta discloses that the material of the dielectric substrate may be a cloth glass (i.e. fiberglass).

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 3, 4; 7-9, 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over any one of Bruns, Maschotta and Anderson in view of Forbes et al (all references of record).

The primary references disclose the claimed invention except for the explicit disclosure of driving and receiving circuitry including such circuitry being memory circuitry.

Forbes et al discloses in Fig. 9 thereof, a transmission line system (920) operatively connected between a driver (e.g. 910) and a receiver (930). Moreover, as described in the specification of Forbes et al (e.g. cols 4, 5), a preferred application of the Forbes et al transmission line system is for dynamic random access memory (i.e. DRAM).

Accordingly, it would have been obvious in view of the references, taken as a whole, to have similarly applied the transmission lines of any one of the primary references for use in driving and receiving circuitry for DRAM applications, such as taught by Forbes et al. Such a modification would have been considered an obvious substitution of art recognized transmission line structures, which would have provided the same signal transmission effect, thereby suggesting the obviousness of such a modification.

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Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maschotta or Anderson in view of Forbes et al (all references of record).

As described in the preceding rejection, it would have been obvious to have applied the transmission line arrangement of either primary reference to a DRAM arrangement for the obvious reason stated therein. Moreover, note that Maschotta or Anderson provides for the dielectric material of the dielectric coating to be the same material as that of the dielectric substrate.

Claims 17; 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bruns, Maschotta or Anderson in view of Adachi (all references of record).

Note that each of the above primary references discloses the claimed invention, except for the recitation that the microstrip conductors provide reduced propagation delay.

Adachi provides an exemplary teaching of placing a dielectric layer over microstrip conductors, the resultant arrangement causes the “signal propagation to be improved in speed” (i.e. corresponding to a reduction in propagation delay) as described in the abstract thereof.

Accordingly, it would have been obvious in view of the reference, taken as a whole, to have realized that by placing dielectric layers over the microstrip conductors of any one of the primary references, such transmission line structures obviously would have provided the function of reduced propagation delay, especially in view of the recognition thereof by Adachi.

Applicant's arguments filed 17 July 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant has argued that each one of the prior art references does not meet the limitation of the thickness being “greater than an average thickness of the conformal coating across the

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printed circuit board or substrate”. In particular, it has been asserted by applicant that the claims recite a coating over the microstrip lines is thicker than the average coating thickness over the entire substrate

In response, it should be again noted that in each of the prior art references, the dielectric material overlay (i.e. conformal coating) is of a respective thickness, which is significantly greater than the thickness of the corresponding underlying substrate. Accordingly, it appears that such a significantly greater thickness in the dielectric overlay of the prior art references corresponds to the overlay condition as disclosed by applicant’s invention (e.g. fig. 6) and as such, the overlay conditions of the prior art must necessarily be considered “conformal” (i.e. to the same degree as used by applicant in the Fig. 6 embodiment) and thus meets the limitation regarding the claimed average thickness, by virtue of the like configuration, depicted in applicant’s Fig. 6 embodiment. It is not seen by way of any evidence, in view of applicant’s Fig. 6 preferred embodiment, how applicant’s significantly thicker “conformal” coating would distinguish over the correspondingly thicker dielectric coating as applied to any one of the prior art references. In other words, if applicant’s thicker overlay is deemed “conformal”, then the thick coating of each prior art reference must likewise be considered “conformal”

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

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will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Benny Lee at telephone number 571 272 1764.

B. Lee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benny Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BENNY T. LEE
PRIMARY EXAMINER
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